

MELT *your* muffin top

with **Holly Rigsby**

FIT YUMMY MUMMY
F2M™



Melt Your Muffin Top

Discover the Secrets to Transform Your Tummy and
Burn Off the Mommy Belly Fat!

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Introduction

Dear Mom,

Without a doubt, the two happiest moments of my life were giving birth to my two amazing sons. Cradling them in my arms, looking into their eyes, I can't even begin to explain the immense joy and love that ran through my body.

But not long after each birth, reality hit.

I no longer had an excuse for my unusual eating habits, my lack of energy and strength, and the unfamiliar sight of my body that greeted me in the mirror.

Even after my post-baby belly had a chance to settle, I still had a jello-like layer of fat around my tummy. I decided I wasn't going to let the baby fat get the better of me. The ultimate miracle of life wasn't going to stop me from wearing my bikini by the pool or make me think I wasn't attractive or good enough. I was determined to take action.

From that point it became a battle of Me vs. the Muffin Top!

After my first son, Tyler, was born, I struggled for a good two years to find an effective way to tackle the problem. After all, I had no experience with working out and I had poor eating habits. Prior to becoming a mom, I managed my weight with diet pills and calorie-restricted diets.

I quickly realized that what worked for me in the past was not an option for me as a mom.

I devoted myself to learning and experimenting with healthy fitness strategies that could help me safely banish my pot-baby muffin top without taking up my time that I absolutely needed with my family.

Over the course of 8 years, I've been sharing my fat loss strategies with hundreds of thousands of moms across the world. I've come up with a super-effective system for ensuring a slim tummy and a most attractive post-baby body!

Why Do Most Moms Struggle?

Nearly every struggling mom that reaches out and asks for help is overwhelmed by the amount of information available. Many so-called “experts” are spreading false, misleading, or even dangerous information at the expense of our health: from the tactics listed in popular fitness magazines to infomercials promising overnight, effortless results. It’s no wonder moms struggle and get caught up in such ineffective, quick fix strategies.

The most common mistakes made are the belief in performing endless sets of ab exercises to burn belly fat; following restricted calorie diets filled with fake diet foods; and forcing in long, boring cardio workouts that suck up hours each week. Not only do their efforts increase frustration, they also drain our energy and kill the hope that results are even possible to achieve.

What sets this busy mom workout system apart is that it has been tested thousands of times by real moms in vastly different situations, all over the globe. And it works! Dozens of testimonials and success stories have been published to prove it.

What’s the Secret?

While what I teach is not actually a secret, moms do know what to do; it’s just a matter of actually doing it! That’s why I’ve helped to simplify the process and make it doable for busy moms to follow and implement. There are 3 basic principles for banishing the dreaded muffin top and getting an even better pre-baby body back. If you take anything away from reading this book, remember these 3 principles!

1. Eat Supportively

Make small changes to your eating habits each day focusing on foods that support fat loss and a healthy metabolism. Build meals around the 2 P’s: Protein and Produce.

2. Exercise with Intensity

Increasing the intensity and challenge of workouts with short rests periods is essential for boosting your metabolism and burning fat all day long, even while you sleep.

3. Strengthen Your Core

To see and feel the most dramatic tummy-flattening effects, you must focus on tightening your mommy belly by working from the inside out. Effective core exercises work the deep muscles of your core through stabilization exercise. In turn, a stronger core acts as a natural corset!

Sounds simple enough, right?

I guarantee you that if you master these 3 principles, you will find yourself in control of your body, your mood, your energy, your confidence—and yes, your tummy!

The rest of this book will cover these 3 principles in detail and share some tips for maximizing your efforts. I hope to shed some light on this potentially confusing area and demonstrate how you can effectively melt your muffin top working out no more than 90 minutes a week.

How to Use This Book

Without a doubt, the biggest and best thing for you to do is to take action as soon as possible. Waiting for the right time is one of the biggest obstacles to making change. Fact is, there will never be a right time, as we always have obstacles and excuses—that's life, especially as a mom! No sense in putting off the results you can potentially see and feel in a matter of weeks.

My suggestion for how to use this book is to read a chapter and decide how you can take action on it immediately. Most chapters will contain a handful of actionable items that you can gradually start to incorporate into your life. When you are finished with a chapter, take a moment and decide how you can take action on the information you read.

Make sure you check out your free gifts, which are a "Thank-you" for purchasing this book!

The sooner you begin, the sooner you will see results, not only in the mirror but also in your energy levels, mood, and confidence. If working with thousands of moms with this system has taught me anything, it's that each woman is different but that a few basic principles can be the cornerstone of a lifetime of happiness.

I look forward to being a part of your journey to a happier, healthier, beautiful you!

Your Friend and Coach,

Holly Rigsby

Holly Rigsby



Now, As a Special Thank-You for Reading *Melt Your Muffin Top*, I Want to Give You...

One Amazing FREE Gifts!!!

Vooluu

At Vooluu, we have a clear mission: Love for life.

“Nothing ever gets easier. You just get stronger.”

– Unknown

We believe in the power of creativity, being yourself, and dancing when the time feels right.

Vooluu is the evolution of natural products, fitness, and holistic health. People strive for their entire lives to become healthy, but we believe total health can only truly be achieved once mind, body, and spirit are connected. The combination of the arts, dance, music, nature, and love for humanity is the fastest way to get there.

“There are shortcuts to happiness, and dancing is one of them.”

– Vicki Baum

Have you ever wondered exactly why people spend their entire year looking forward to their summer vacation? This is usually the one time a year when people are free to be themselves—to kick back, relax, move at their own pace, and live in the moment. No wonder people look forward to it!

Too often we are pushed to max productivity, to think three steps ahead, to always be thinking about tomorrow. Enough! We at Vooluu believe it's time to live, laugh, and love like never before. Work can wait. Life is passing you by!

Eat healthy. Get fit. Go natural. Vooluu is here to help guide you on your way!



Top 10 Muffin-Top-Melting Foods

To begin our journey of banishing our muffin tops and trimming our tummies, I want to start with perhaps the most important tip of all. I'm sure for most fans of Fit Yummy Mummy, this will come as no surprise.

It is simple yet effective. It comes off as a no-brainer, but it's an absolute must.

What is the most important tip for attaining and maintaining a lean and healthy body?

Eat Clean More Often!

In order to experience the fastest and most dramatic belly fat burning effects, you must make changes to the foods you eat. Indeed, if there were ever an area to put more focus and energy into, it would be your nutrition plan. Controlling what you eat gives you the most bang for your buck when it comes to battling the mommy belly fat.

Many moms I talk to are convinced that they eat clean and that their diet is good. Sure, they grab fast food every now and then when picking up the kids from practice, and of course it's time to take a closer look at what you are putting into your body. Keep a food log for a few days then see if your choices truly are CLEAN.

What exactly does "clean" mean?

The Fit Yummy Mummy nutrition philosophy revolves around choosing to eat whole foods that support fat loss. Eating clean includes consuming quality proteins; fresh, colorful produce; and healthy fats.

It's just as useful to know what clean DOESN'T mean. Stay away from the overly processed "dead foods." This means watching out for foods high in sugars (yes, even if it's organic) and refined carbs, as these types of foods will only cause your body to HOLD on to fat.

The beauty of the Eat Clean tip is its flexibility: You can choose clean foods that you like, and you aren't stuck eating those you don't. To help you get started in making your own "clean" meal and food choices, I'm sharing with you 10 of the best foods for losing that muffin top.

Top 10 Muffin-Top-Melting Foods

The following foods are my favorites for burning off the muffin top. They are excellent options because:

- They are filled with fat-burning, metabolism-boosting benefits
- They boost energy and crush cravings
- They are versatile and can be mixed and matched for a variety of meals and snacks
- Best of all, they are easy to find and use

My clean-eating strategy involves eating every 3 to 4 hours, and I build every meal around including protein and produce, adding healthy fats as needed.

In addition, I choose organic whenever possible. I encourage you to do the same, as organic foods are free of pesticides and are often better or more complex in taste, which could lead to you eating more.

One note about this list: These are not the only fat burning foods I recommend nor keep on hand. This list just highlights 10 of my personal favorites to get you started in the right direction.

1. Rolled Oats

Rolled oats rock.

They can be used for a quick yet nutritious and satisfying breakfast. They're perfect for a no-hassle on-the-go snack. And they're unbelievably yummy!

It's not a coincidence that rolled oats are #1 on my fat-fighting list. Not only are oats a complex carbohydrate, providing long-lasting energy to kick start your day, but they also fill you up with fat-fighting fiber, keeping you satisfied and stabilizing your blood sugar levels. This keeps you from releasing too much insulin, a fat storage hormone, and lowers your risk of diabetes and other dietary ailments. And in the long run, the fullness you feel after a bowl of oats helps to fight cravings. What more could you ask for?

If you are sensitive to Gluten, seek out the Gluten-Free version. I always have a couple bags of Bob's Red Mill organic whole rolled oats on hand. Add cinnamon to your oats for an added metabolism boost—and to enhance the flavor!

2. Apples

Apples are one of the easiest grab-and-go foods you can have on hand. I never go grocery shopping without restocking our fruit bowl with apples of all kinds. They are high in water content and fiber, both of which lead to a feeling of fullness. Further, research has shown that the pectin in apples aids in your fat loss efforts by causing the stomach to empty more slowly, making you feel satisfied longer. Apples provide a host of nutrients and slow-burning energy to fuel your busy day and keep you healthy during stressful times. They don't say, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," for nothing!

Aside from the fat-burning assistance of apples, you can't go wrong with their tremendous variety. A typical grocery store can have 5 or more types of apples, all of which provide different levels of crisp, crunch, tart, and sweetness. Tyler's favorite apples are Granny Smith, while I can never get enough of Honeycrisps. If you tire of grabbing an apple for lunch, try a new variety each time you go to the store.

3. Blueberries

I always have a fresh container and a giant frozen bag of these powerful berries on hand! Blueberries are one of nature's power foods. Not only are they super high in antioxidants to keep you youthful, healthy, and energetic; but they also are a sweet source of fiber and contain tannins, which act as astringents in the digestive system to reduce inflammation and promote a healthier digestive tract.

As a bonus, these pair oh so well with #7 on the list for a Fat-Fighting Super Dessert!

4. Almonds

These nuts are the perfect portable protein. They are easy to carry as an emergency snack, essential for a healthy trail mix, and even pair well with a fruit or veggie. High in metabolism-boosting protein, healthy fats, and indispensable fiber, almonds are an amazing super snack that can fit anyone's diet and budget.

Watch your portions though: These nuts can pack a caloric wallop if you're not careful! An easy and simple way around it is to measure out 1/4 cup servings beforehand, sticking them in a snack-size baggie and throwing in your purse or bag.

I always have at least 2-3 nut varieties on hand for between-meal snacking. My favorites include pistachios, cashews, and walnuts. In fact, my toddler prefers these options, as they are easier for him to chew. Mix it up by buying a different nut every 1-2 weeks, or choose a mixed nut option. However, go raw whenever possible. Processed nuts are often coated in unhealthful oils, and the roasting process diminishes many of the nutritional benefits.

5. Eggs

Yes, eggs ARE good for you. In fact, they are considered the gold standard of protein quality because of their superior amino acid content, providing your body with the building blocks for lean muscle—the heart and soul of your metabolism. Furthermore, the high protein content keeps you satisfied and energized much longer than the same number of calories derived from carbohydrate sources. Plus, they are affordable and super easy to make: It takes less than 3 minutes to prepare an egg, and there are plenty of options to mix it up.

I always choose organic or, when possible, local eggs. If you've never had fresh eggs from a local farm, where chickens are allowed to roam freely, you'd be amazed at the difference in taste! If your only option is the local supermarket, don't be afraid to spend a little more on Omega-3 eggs or organic ones, but conventional eggs still fight fat and boost your metabolism!

6. Spinach

This super veggie goes with everything. At only 5 calories per cup, how could it not? You can use it in omelets, wraps, salads, side dishes, smoothies, stir fry's—and much more. Nutritionally, spinach is a great source of beta carotene, vitamin C, calcium, folate, magnesium, and fiber, and believe it contains plenty of protein! All of these things not only keep your body healthy but also keep your metabolism humming!

7. Greek Yogurt

Greek yogurt is super high in protein, and its live cultures help boost immunity and aid in digestion, which leads to less belly bloat! I like Greek yogurt so much because it offers more than just nutrition: It is a wonderfully rich and creamy treat! Paired with blueberries and other fresh fruit (and even some rolled oats), you can make a health-promoting and muscle-building parfait.

Greek yogurt is a versatile food. It makes for a quick but filling breakfast or a simple yet satisfying snack. It can be added to a green smoothie or on top of your favorite dish. Yes, this superfood can even take the place of sour cream!

NOTE: Avoid choosing varieties loaded with added sugars (yes, even organic sugars), High Fructose Corn Syrup, and artificial sweeteners. Choose only the ones high in protein. Always read the ingredients label!

8. Wild Salmon

Salmon is king of the fish. While a simple and delicious protein source, salmon adds another vital piece to the fat-fighting puzzle: Omega-3 fats. These essential fatty acids promote fat loss by helping to regulate insulin and even decrease insulin resistance. They improve blood sugar control, which helps reduce food cravings and overeating. Plus, research shows that Omega-3's help your body burn off calories before they get stored as fat.

I tend to buy mine frozen to last longer and for easy prep. Nutritionally, it is just as good frozen as it is fresh. However, be sure you buy wild caught salmon, as farmed varieties usually are missing the Omega-3's, which are derived from a salmon's wild diet (in fact, most farmed salmon have to add color to make it pink). Also, avoid processed or "pre-prepared" dishes that are often loaded with additives that negate the benefits of the Omega-3's.

9. Protein Powder

Protein powder is another convenient option that allows you to get your fat-fighting protein in on the go. We all lead busy lives, and the reality is that occasionally you might not have time to bake salmon at night or prepare a protein-packed salad for lunch. While you should still eat as much real and whole food as possible (especially foods from this list!), in a pinch, protein powder offers many benefits, the most obvious being muscle-building protein.

As a partner of Prograde Nutrition, I am all stocked up on [Chocolate Protein Powder and Meal Replacement Powder](#). If I truly do not have time for a meal, I just mix a couple scoops of Prograde Lean with water or almond milk in my magic bullet for a creamy, frothy, filling meal to help me stay on track.

But the fun doesn't stop there: Lean MR and the Protein powder are also super versatile. I love experimenting and getting creative from adding to smoothies to making fun snacks such as Cocoa Oats!

Cocoa Oats

- 3/4 cup rolled oats
- 1 TBSP Almond Butter
- 1-2 Scoops Prograde Lean or Chocolate Protein Powder
- 1-2 TBSP water or "milk" (I use unsweetened almond or coconut milk)

Mix and enjoy! No, I do not cook the oats. I think of this like a No Bake Cookie. However, I will also use this recipe to make Tyler breakfast where the oats are cooked. He eats every oat right up!

10. Salsa

Tomatoes have wonderful health benefits, and I love to have them on hand in the form of salsa! Salsa is an awesome way to add energizing flavor to your meals without many calories. Choose a spicy variety and get the added metabolism-boosting kick from capsaicin, the chemical in peppers that gives them their bite. I use salsa as a supportive condiment and even as a salad dressing.

Bonus: Healthy Fat—Coconut Oil

Coconut Oil has been shown to increase your metabolism and assist in burning more fat. On top of that, it boasts a long list of additional health and cooking benefits, among which are antimicrobial properties and a high smoke point that makes it ideal for pan frying. Plus, it's entirely delicious!

You might be wondering how a fat can be labeled as healthy. The media and even government-sponsored nutrition programs have led us to believe that the consumption of fat is responsible for ailments from diabetes to obesity and cardiovascular disease to cancer (remember the Food Pyramid listing fats and oils at the top with the recommendation to "use sparingly"?).

However, this is only partly true. Fat by itself is not the cause of weight gain. You gain weight when your energy intake is greater than your energy expenditure. And fats are only partly to blame for certain health problems. Some fats, such as the trans fats found in partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, do contribute to heart disease by raising your bad cholesterol and lowering your good cholesterol. However, good fats, such as coconut oil,

butter, and olive oil, are actually beneficial for our bodies, as numerous recent studies have begun to show.

In fact, coconut oil is one of the healthiest oils you can consume. It is rich in lauric acid, which is known for its antiviral, antibacterial, and antifungal properties, and it contains no trans fat. The saturated fat in coconut oil is different from many other oils in that it is of the medium-chain fatty acid (MCFA) variety. The body digests MCFAs more easily and sends these fats directly to the liver where they are immediately converted into energy. Thus, coconut oil is a fat that is used to **make** energy instead of to **store** it on our bodies.

I keep a jar of coconut oil on hand at all times. I blend it in my green smoothies; stir it into my rolled oats; use it to cook my eggs, veggies, and proteins; or have a teaspoon full (which Alexander LOVES) – just to give you a few ideas.

My preferred brand is Nutiva. When selecting a coconut oil, be sure to look for Unrefined – Organic. Your body and taste buds will thank you for choosing unrefined!

Your Action Plan: Write These Foods Down and Stock Up

Now you have a list of the foods that work, take a few minutes to do some meal planning. I suggest you make a shopping list and stock your kitchen with at least half these foods to start. Once you explore different uses for each, you'll feel more confident in eating "clean" and should pick up the rest of the list.

After buying the foods and trying them out, **be consistent**. This means don't just try them once and revert to your previous diet. Consistency is key when making ANY kind of change, and to be consistent with eating, you have to buy these foods every time you shop and incorporate them into your daily plan.

Even substituting a snack of chips for one of Greek yogurt and blueberries will help tremendously. Take one step at a time, as small of steps as needed, until you are comfortable with your new habits.

Get this: Just 3 days of good eats gives your body a chance to change. You'll feel more energy and notice your tummy is flatter each morning you awake. Combine these efforts with a full- body, strength-training workout, and

within a matter of weeks, the fat will seem to melt away! (Read on to learn more about the benefits of these fun metabolic-boosting workouts—and discover a simple program that you can start today!)

To recap, here are the 10 foods:

1. Rolled Oats
2. Apples
3. Blueberries
4. Almonds
5. Eggs
6. Spinach
7. Greek Yogurt
8. Wild Salmon
9. Protein Powder
10. Salsa

Bonus: Coconut Oil

And here are your Action Steps:

1. Write down these foods
2. Pick up at least half of them from the store
3. Begin adding them to your diet, replacing “unclean” foods with these “clean” ones
4. Notice yourself feeling better and your tummy looking flatter!



3 Strategies for Long-Lasting Results

There is a reason why the muffin top is one of the biggest areas of concern for moms. It serves as a rude awakening after giving birth, and it's very tough to switch your habits when the last 9 months you've been experiencing strange cravings and your body has been growing like crazy!

This happened to me when I gave birth to Alexander. As soon as the joy of seeing my newborn baby had subsided, I couldn't help but take an honest look in the mirror—the first time in months I was looking at “just me.”

And I was shocked at what I saw!

In some ways, I had let myself go while pregnant with Alexander. But my number one priority was to have a happy, healthy baby, and so I wasn't concerned with keeping my weight in check.

Even 4 weeks post-baby, every time I looked in the mirror, I would see an unsightly muffin top. I felt it was finally time to regain my own health and body back.

While it took a good deal of planning and hard work, within 3 months, I was able to “lose the baby weight” I had gained while pregnant with Alexander. But the real challenge was to continue my fitness and keep the weight off. This goal required continued and focused effort, but the rewards have been phenomenal.

So what does it take to lose the Muffin Top—and keep it off?

Not what many moms initially think. You cannot shrink your muffin top with all the creative crunches or abdominal routines around. In fact, even the best metabolism-boosting workouts by themselves cannot blast away the fat on your belly.

Part of this is because targeted fat loss doesn't happen. Challenging your abdominal muscles will not burn any more midsection fat than using your legs or arms. In reality, since your abdominals are a small muscle group, they are incapable of doing large amounts of work, so your total energy expenditure will likely be lower doing only sit-ups and crunches as opposed to doing squats, lunges, and pushups. The takeaway is that, when you exercise, your goal is to use as much energy as possible (within reason). Your goal is NOT to make your stomach muscles burn!

But the second reason why abdominal workouts, or even just hard workouts in general, are not the be all end all of busting your muffin top goes back to last chapter. Yes, following an effective workout plan is certainly beneficial, but working out alone is not the recipe for great abs.

Maybe you have heard this quote: “Abs are made in the kitchen.”

Yep! What and how you eat has everything to do with the look and feel of your mommy belly. If you are ready to melt away the muffin top and reveal a flat tummy, then you must begin by taking an honest look at your eating habits.

Based on the wonderful discussions shared on the Fit Yummy Mummy Facebook Page, it is great to see how many moms are finally understanding and are beginning their mommy belly makeover by focusing on eating habits.

But for every mom that understands what to do, there are several that struggle. It’s just that so many moms can’t get around the “diet” aspect.

I say “diet” in quotes because the best results do NOT come from the latest fad that requires the restriction of calories. Starvation diets are a quick fix that many attempt to implement in the hopes that the belly fat will drop faster. However, the truth of the matter is that eating less actually causes your body to hold ON to fat, especially the fat in your lower belly.

Great flat tummy results come from eating ENOUGH of the RIGHT Foods and doing it in a way that allows you to SUSTAIN those eating habits. After all, this is a matter of getting flat and KEEPING these results, right? So the changes made have to be ones you can continue for life.

We’re talking about lifestyle change. It’s the opposite of a fad diet (another reason why fad diets fail you is that they are impossible and even dangerous to follow for life).

So what are the RIGHT foods?

In addition to including in your diet the 10 Superfoods I covered last chapter, follow these guidelines:

- Eat whole, natural foods.
- Avoid processed foods, fake diet foods, and foods loaded with sugars and/or artificial sweeteners.
- Center your diet on protein, produce and healthy fats.

One trick I teach the Fit Yummy Mummy's is to practice the Power of Ten, with the goal being to eat 10 servings of produce (fruits & veggies) a day. You can read all about the Power of Ten in a later chapter.

Making the change to eat more produce can initially feel challenging, but it is a change that can be made, as I recently explained to a Facebook Fan:

Question: I would like to lose my belly fat, but the hardest part for me is the diet. I can definitely stay away from fast food, but I don't eat vegetables...I'm just struggling with the diet part. Please help!

Answer: To tackle this issue, I developed a 3-step starting point for making lasting changes that can permanently melt the Mommy Belly. The reason it is effective is because it causes you to take action and is simple enough that anyone can do it—if they want to!

1. Make a List of All the Reasons Why You Want to Change

While it's easy to say you want to lose the belly fat, it's much tougher to actually follow through. Motivation to make daily change can be a struggle unless you have your reasons why out in front of you to remind you and keep you focused.

Be thoughtful when making this list. It's more than just "so my jeans fit." Keep asking WHY. Why is it so important to fit back into your skinny jeans, or to be able to wear T-shirts and tank tops? Is it to prove to yourself that you can? Is it to feel young again? Is it to look and feel sexy? Be honest with yourself, and never be afraid to admit the real WHYS behind a change. The more honest you are and the deeper you dig, the more ammunition you will have to fight a bout of lost motivation.

And when I say "make a list," I mean to grab a sheet of paper and pen and write down the WHYS. Tape or pin that list above your bed, on the mirror in the bathroom, at your office at work, or anywhere you it will be in plain sight.

2. Take a Before Photo

Again, honesty is essential to this step. Wear a bathing suit or clothes that show your body (avoid loose-fitting clothes). Take a front and a side picture. Post it where you see it every day—right next to all the reasons why you want to change.

Yes, this will likely be a painful experience, but the discomfort is a good thing. Without a connection to this emotion, it is too easy to slip back into old habits and conveniently forget why you wanted to change your body in the first place. And as you progress, it is easy to forget exactly what you looked like before you began your transformation!

These two steps will also help you confront your demons, which is another huge hurdle that those starting a journey must overcome. The sooner you can be honest with yourself and objectively evaluate where you are, where you want to go, and why you want to do that, the easier and more transparent the whole process will become.

3. Keep a Food Log

As we've talked about, the majority of your results come from your eating habits. Tracking exactly what goes into your body is essential to that honest dialogue necessary for making lasting changes.

I talk to other moms all the time who tell me that they are eating clean and still can't lose weight. When I ask them *exactly* what they are eating, they sometimes reveal that what they claim to be the "occasional" piece of chocolate or fast-food dinner turns into a daily habit. Recording what you eat may reveal these quick fixes that can clean up your diet in a hurry and set you well on your way to a healthier, slimmer body.

For now, write down what you eat for 2 consecutive weeks. Record what you eat/drink, approximately how much, and when it happens. If a piece of food or a non-water drink passes your lips, write it down!

This helps you identify your current eating habits so you can begin to make **small changes**, like trading out that overly processed bowl of cereal for 2 eggs and a cup of blueberries. The little tweaks you make daily are what add up to the most significant muffin-top-melting results.

A food log is the best tool to help you do this because:

1. You cannot change what you do not acknowledge
2. You have a record of what works (keep doing those things) and what is working against you (avoid those things)

Even though a food log has the reputation for being tedious and boring, there's no reason why you can't be creative and make it fun! One easy way to spice it up while still tracking all meals and snacks is to use a camera or

your smart phone to take photos of every meal you eat. This is especially helpful because, while you may not have your notebook with you at dinner with friends, you will most likely have your phone on you, and it's a simple matter of snapping a photo of what you eat. Since this might be hard for snacks and for portions, a combination of pictures and a written account can work well, too.

To sum up, we've discussed how lasting changes can only come about by making lifestyle changes. The key to making lifestyle changes is to choose simple, sustainable habits that are easy to follow, and to start off small. The 3-step starting point will not only help jumpstart your muffin top melting results but will also make the changes you are about to take on doable.

The biggest reason moms give up on any plan designed to create flat tummy results is due to being overwhelmed. The advice for you from this chapter: Keep it Simple, stay focused, and take daily action!



Strength: The Key to Slimming Down, NOT Bulking Up

One principle I use to guide much of my dietary and exercise choices in life is:

If your body is not challenged, your body is not changing.

Doing the same thing day after day will not produce different results. If you ever want to change, you have to challenge your body in a new way.

With that idea in mind, we should move on to one of the most important aspects of burning off that belly fat: Exercise.

But we won't talk about just any kind of exercise. Sure, going for long, leisurely walks is one of the most enjoyable ways to spend a nice evening. While this and other similar activities have their time and place, they won't get you on the fast track to the body you've always wanted.

This is the realm of another type of exercise that is quick, engaging, and highly effective.

Boosting Your Metabolism

Let me ask you a question: Is your goal is to reshape your body, shed some fat, lose some inches, and increase tone and definition?

If the answer is "Yes" to any degree, then **strength** must be a priority of your workouts.

Now, most women I talk with have the opposite notion in mind. They think that strength work will only bulk you up and leave you off worse than you started.

This is a real fear shared by the majority of women, and I'm here to say that it is flat out wrong. Allow me to explain.

Strength training is any form of exercise that forces your muscles to work harder than they are used to in order to improve or increase the amount of lean muscle in your body. The activity of your muscles ties in directly with your metabolism. So the more lean muscle you have, the more calories you burn, and the easier it is to reach your fat loss goals.

Let's back up a bit to cover the metabolism portion of that explanation. We all know what metabolism is, right? It's what you have as a kid but magically

lose as an adult, and it's the reason why you aren't able to eat the same things as before or to keep the same lifestyle.

It's true that your metabolism ties in with how much energy you require (and, thus, how much fat you store when you eat too much energy). But it certainly isn't some magical force that suddenly disappears overnight.

As mentioned earlier, muscle activity is the key to your metabolism.

Muscle is "metabolically active," which means it requires a LOT of calories to stick around. When you improve your muscle, your body requires more energy (calories) to maintain the new muscle.

In other words, muscle burns calories all day long, not just when you are exercising. (Yes, this means you even burn fat while you sleep, and the more muscle you have, the more fat you will burn throughout the night!)

You must move and challenge the muscles in your body in order to increase strength, boost your metabolism, and reshape your body. The more muscles you train, the bigger the metabolic boost.

15-Minute Fat-Burning Workouts

That's right: Burning fat in only 15 minutes. But can a 15-minute workout really be that effective?

Yes! You CAN burn MORE fat in less time!

How?

The secret is something called interval training. It works your whole body, it is intense, and it only takes 15 minutes to complete.

I know it can take a huge leap of faith to actually cut your workout plan back to just 15 minutes, especially if you are used to spending an hour (or more!) on the stair climber, elliptical, or stationary bike. But you may be seeing firsthand that working out for hours a week (or even hours a day) is not getting you results. Instead of giving up, this simply means it is time to reassess what you have been spending your time doing.

Keep in mind the idea I shared at the beginning of this chapter: *If your body is not challenged, your body is not changing.* In other words, if you are looking for different results, you must be willing to DO something different.

Perhaps the most important workout tip I can give you is: More is not better; however, choosing a *more effective* workout plan is always better.

But What About Fat-Burning Cardio?

This is certainly one of the most difficult concepts for a mom to truly embrace. The question above has surfaced more times than I can count from new Fit Yummy Mummy's, who are used to spinning classes, treadmills, and stair climbers. But it's not our fault: We're fed this information from all angles, even gyms, who are supposed to be the experts!

In gym after gym, new initiates are welcomed to the club with a ride on the Cardio bikes. The trainer or instructor will tell you that this part of your workout will burn fat.

In truth, the workouts on the bikes and treadmills that we have been told are fat-burning cardio are actually little more than calorie-burning. Without a restricted diet that will leave you hungry, all you will accomplish is prowess on a bike that goes nowhere.

True fat-burning cardio combines brief and focused interval training with proper nutrition. Fat loss comes from burning calories and building muscle. That's right, building muscle. Not big, freaky, bulging bodybuilding muscles; think tight butt, slender and toned arms, and sexy sculpted thighs.

By keeping the workouts short, your aerobic capacity will constantly and gradually increase—and you'll reduce the risk of overtraining. With long calorie-burning workouts, the risk of overtraining is very real. Anybody who ever tried to join a gym and follow a "one size fits all" plan of cardio and resistance training could easily have experienced this scenario: One day you wake up and never want to see the gym again. Instead of burning the fat off, you have managed to burn yourself out.

Simply put, long workouts leave you drained. That's fine for professional athletes who have nothing to do but train and recover, but does that really work for your life?

With true fat-burning cardio, the workouts are brief and intense. This helps prevent overtraining and failure. During the workout, you are intensely targeting those muscle groups that most dramatically improve appearance and health. The strength you gain is the base of the fat-burning component, which goes back to the metabolism boost we just talked about.

One other benefit for short workouts vs. long dragging ones on a treadmill is that a brief and focused workout will actually energize you. You give up a few minutes of your day for a serious "pick me up" that lasts longer than any

energy shot or double latte. And it's much healthier: When you do settle down, it won't be from a crash. Not only will you be more focused and energized while you are up, most people will experience better sleep.

I have to be honest though: Starving yourself and running on the treadmill will cause you to lose weight, at least temporarily. But some of that weight will be muscle, which won't change your shape or do anything for toning your body. Besides, if you've ever tried it, you know just how hard this program is to stick to.

Read on to find out how to incorporate interval training into your exercise routine—and break the chains that bind you to the stair stepper!

How It's Done

Now that we've gone over the "why" behind strength training (boosting your metabolism, burning fat during and after your workouts, shaping your body, only 15-20-minute workouts), let's move to the "how."

Strength training is a versatile form of exercise. The moves you use can range from bodyweight exercises such as squats and pushups to moves that use equipment such as dumbbells, medicine balls, and bands.

The essential part of an effective strength-training program is challenging the major muscle groups of your body with each workout so you improve strength and endurance. This means that your workouts should not feel easy or comfortable. If you can easily perform more than 15 repetitions of any given movement—or if you can smile and dance around while you are doing it—then this is NOT strength training.

To reshape your body and do more than just "lose weight," you must follow a full-body, progressively more challenging, strength-based workout plan.

Forget the dinky weights you can hold with your fingertips. Baby Alexander has shown that he can easily toss around a one-pound weight, and I'm sure he would have no problem with a 2.5-pounder. If this little guy can handle those weights, you need to reconsider the weights you are choosing for your workouts if they are any less than 10 pounds.

Bottom line: If you wish to LOSE the baby weight, then LOSE the baby weights!

Focus on challenging your muscles, which will boost your metabolism. You do this by losing the baby weights, which will help you burn more fat, get

lean, and get toned. The stronger you get and the more you improve your muscles (not the same as bulking up), the higher your metabolism and the faster you achieve lean, toned results.

I promise that as you focus on conditioning your body to become stronger, your body will naturally take on the lean, fit shape you desire. It has to change since it's being challenged!

Reassess Your Strength-Training Routine

As we now know, strength training must be the priority of your fat-burn workouts. But how do you actually use it as a tool to lose weight?

You'll need to reorganize your workout time to focus on intense, challenging, and full-body resistance-training workouts that take 15-20 minutes total to complete.

This means no wasted time going from working one small muscle group at a time, and no dinky workouts that use light weights and high reps.

A short, 15-minute workout that focuses on a total-body approach is what allows you to target all the major muscles in the body for maximum metabolism-boosting effects. The higher intensity of these workouts forces your body to change and to get you results quickly.

Later in this book, I will share a few high-intensity, full-body, strength-training exercises. For now, let's stick to the principles of strength training workouts.

- Keep the intensity high, meaning that you want your muscles to be challenged with 3 sets of 8–12 repetitions (I said “challenged,” so use a heavy weight that is tough to lift for 8–12 repetitions!)
- Exercises can use bodyweight (e.g., squats, lunges, pushups, jumping jacks), or you can use a variety of equipment such as resistance bands, stability balls, and dumbbells.
- The workout should take 15-20 minutes to complete.
- Workouts should be full-body workouts, targeting your upper body, lower body and core in each workout. This allows you to complete only three total-body, strength-training routines a week.
- Since these workouts might leave you sore and are designed to be challenging for your muscles, be sure to allow a day of rest in between each workout for recovery. After all, your lean muscle improves at

rest, not during the workouts. Your body must have a chance to repair in order to respond in a positive way by increasing lean muscle, increasing strength, boosting metabolism, and burning more fat. By choosing to skip recovery, you choose to prevent your body from burning more fat, or worse: You risk burn out and even injury.

As I said, you will get some workout ideas in later chapters. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce you to the principles of strength training—and to dispel the myth that strength training will cause women to bulk up.

Still Scared of “Bulking Up?”

Just the mere mention of the word “muscle” makes many women cringe. Images of huge bodybuilders with Hulk-like bodies make them run far away from using any type of challenging weight. This is a myth: women simply do not have the ability to bulk up.

Men, on the other hand, are able to add lots of muscle because:

- They have the hormones to do so (we have insufficient amounts of testosterone to bulk easily)
- They lift weights in an entirely different fashion (bodybuilders do spend hours a week in the gym and force their muscles to bulk up—getting bulky is really hard work!)
- They must eat a tremendous amount of food (in order for muscle to grow in noticeable size, your body needs a LOT of calories to get big)

Oh, and the ladies who DO seek out careers as professional bodybuilders are training MUCH differently than are women just seeking fat loss—and they tend to have help from a variety of supplements.

So ladies, unless you are taking testosterone-boosting supplements, lifting VERY heavy weights, setting a goal with your workouts to get bulky, and eating about 5,000 calories a day, **you will not bulk up.**

Even guys who want to get big have trouble and must make a concerted effort to do so.

Strength Training for a Lean and Fit Body

To get a lean and defined body, muscle is the key, and strength-building workouts are essential.

Do nothing to maintain or increase muscle, and it withers away, along with your fat-burning metabolism. This is especially true if you are a mom who is entering her 30's or 40's.

Lose your muscle and you are left with a soft, flabby appearance, and it will be a struggle to lose weight, which gets harder with each passing year.

But work hard to strengthen your muscles, and you will be burning much more fat, even at rest.

So...are you ready for a change?

Good. Then you know to expect a challenge!

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After searching for an organic, gluten/ soy/ dairy free protein powder, I finally found VooLuu. It's rare to find a powder that doesn't have a lot of chemically composed ingredients, so when I discovered VooLuu I was very excited. The first time I tried the Greens Protein Shake I had little sleep the night before and was in the early stages of pregnancy, so being tired is an understatement. I kid you not, I put a few scoops into my breakfast smoothie and the rest of the day had so much energy. There aren't any stimulants or caffeine, so I was surprised. I struggle to get enough protein in my diet, so adding this to my smoothies is a great option

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5 “Get Your Body Back After Baby” Workout Tips

Yes, as moms we ALL know what a miracle it is to bring a new life into this world. Our bodies have undergone some amazing changes to make this blessing possible. But now that your baby is here, the very next thing on your agenda is to get your body back after baby!

While we all know what we *want* to accomplish, the tricky part is knowing *how* to do it safely and effectively so you can feel good and still have time to spend with your loved ones!

In this chapter, I’d like to share 5 simple training tips to kick start the post baby fat burn because no mom should have to worry about being injured or about spending more time away from their baby than they need to!

1. When to Start

Right now! As long as you did not experience complications or additional surgeries during delivery and are not under doctor’s orders to stay off your feet, you can get moving within the first week of giving birth.

The “waiting game” is starting to fade out. This is especially true if you exercised throughout your pregnancy. Your body will actually CRAVE activity—I know mine did! Even if your doctor gives you the standard, “Do not exercise for six weeks,” prescription, speak up! Show your doctor the list of exercises you want to do. Also, do not just ask to “exercise”; be specific.

Before you start, however, here are some important safety tips.

Listen to your body. I cannot stress this enough. If at any time you feel discomfort, pain, light-headedness, or nausea, or if you experience bleeding, STOP immediately. Do not try to push through it. These symptoms can signal an underlying pathology associated with childbirth. Either take the time you need to recover, or share this information with your doctor. He or she may be able to give better insight into the reasons for those symptoms and how to handle them.

Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water before, during, and after your workout sessions, especially if you are breastfeeding. This is especially important for high-intensity exercises, which cause you to sweat more than light- or moderate-intensity work.

Do not to overdo it! Doing too much too soon, jumping into rigorous activity, and lifting heavy weights when you aren't ready will only lead to trouble. Your muscles and ligaments need time to recoup. They are overly flexible due to the hormones released during pregnancy and are easily stretched, so consequently they are more prone to injury. Chronic pain can result from premature sessions of running, stepping, or weight lifting with misaligned posture and loose joints and ligaments. Aside from this obvious concern, you also risk burning yourself out. At FYM, we preach that everything you do to burn fat or live a healthy life must be sustainable. If you jump back into relatively heavy exercise when you aren't ready—and only your body and mind will be able to tell you when you are—you could risk not enjoying the pursuit of your goals and even not fully enjoying time spent with your family! For maximum safety and happiness, only come back when you are mentally and physically ready, and, when you do, start off small.

2. What You Can Do

Pelvic floor and core activation exercises can be started as soon as possible after birth. Pelvic floor exercises such as Kegels should be started ASAP and can be done anywhere. These foundational exercises can hasten the restorative process, improve your posture, flatten your abdominal muscles, and prepare you to return to your favorite strength-training routine. The sooner you start, the sooner your body responds.

Walking is a must, and you can do this as soon as you feel comfortable to do so. I had baby Alexander strapped to me in a carrier and was out the door one week after we came home from the hospital! It might take longer for you, but when you are ready, start with a nice, relaxing walk.

From here, you will then ease into a bodyweight strength and intervals training program. As you regain strength and endurance and your body is responding positively to your workouts, you can then gradually begin to increase the intensity of your routine.

Last chapter, we discussed the importance of strength to achieving your ideal body. In a later chapter, we will go over a sample workout routine that you can do in your own home to fight the muffin top. However, if you need more guidance on an effective, efficient, and fun strength and intervals program, just go to my blog at [getfitandyummy](http://getfitandyummy.com) to find out more!

3. Battle of the Mommy Belly

The most common concern of new moms is how to get rid of the jelly belly! Many worry whether a flatter, more toned tummy is even possible to achieve again.

I'm here to tell you, both from personal experience and from listening to the hundreds of moms at Club FYM, that yes, it is possible! As long as you follow an effective exercise program and a supportive nutrition plan, the process of burning off the mommy belly fat is not as hard as you think.

If you consistently performed core-strengthening exercises and worked out throughout your pregnancy, this process will be easier.

There are some great exercises you can do to bring your abdominal muscles back together, rebuild your core, and help you regain a flat tummy. We'll cover these in detail in a later chapter. But as I just pointed out, avoid jumping into intense exercise too soon, before your abdominal or pelvic floor muscles are ready, and avoid CRUNCHES.

The traditional Crunch is one of the worst exercises you can do after having a baby, especially if you have Diastasis Recti (abdominal separation).

Crunches can actually increase the gap! Plus, crunches only target a few of your core muscles, primarily the Rectus Abdominus (your six pack muscles), which is one of the most overstretched muscle groups during pregnancy, and your obliques. These muscles easily overpower the weaker internal abdominal muscles (e.g., the Transverse Abdominus) during crunch-like exercises, which can cause your abdominal wall to bulge out!

The abdominal exercise secret to flattening your post baby mommy belly is...
Work from the inside out!

In addition to cleaning up what you eat, your focus must be on rebuilding strength and control of your Transverse Abdominus, your deepest core muscle. This muscle compresses the abdominal wall, acts like a corset, draws the belly button closer to the spine, and is the body's most important core stabilizer.

Follow these post-baby core exercises to strengthen your abdominals from the inside out.

The "drawing in" maneuver: You can lie on your back, on your side, or get on all fours. When ready, simply contract and hold your deep core

muscles as you imagine drawing your belly button in toward your spine. Hold for a count of 10 as you breathe normally. Repeat 6-8 times.

Front plank variations: To perform a plank, lay on your belly on the ground. Prop yourself up on your elbows and toes, with your elbows square with the ground and directly beneath your shoulders. Relax as much as possible, but keep your core tight so as to prevent your lower back from sagging. If you find the full plank to be too hard, simply prop yourself on your knees instead of your toes until you have mastered the exercise. These are most effective when you perform sets of 10-second holds with a brief rest between sets instead of holding for 30-60+ seconds at a time.

Side planks: The side plank follows the same principles as the front plank, but you are only on one elbow and have your side facing the ground. Just as with the front plank, it is most effective to perform sets of 10-second holds with a brief rest between sets.

4. Make It Easy to Exercise

To make the most of your post-baby workout plan, set up a routine that you can stick to. Sticking with a plan that is “too easy” is far better than having to scrap a challenging plan halfway because it was too demanding (whether in terms of effort or time) in the first place.

Consistency is key to your success. Make it easy on yourself and work out at home. Create a workout space in a convenient corner of your home. Have your equipment set up and ready to go, so once baby takes a nap or is playing, you can grab a quick 10-15 minute workout.

Yes, 15 minutes is all you need when you are following an effective workout plan. As a busy mom, there’s just no time for hour-long workouts. Besides, who has the energy? 15 minutes of the right type of exercise will make you feel amazing and give you more energy to get through the day no matter how exhausted you were to begin with.

5. Set Realistic Goals

The final and most important tip when focusing on how to get your body back after baby is to set realistic goals. Believing that getting back to your pre-pregnancy shape will happen immediately is a surefire way to become frustrated, give up, and settle for a “Mom Body.”

If you're reading this, then I know you DON'T want to settle! And if you're careful at the beginning, YOU WON'T HAVE TO!

The way to keep from overreaching is to set an ambitious goal, then cut it in half (give or take). You have to set your ego aside when starting out, especially if you've never followed a self-guided workout program before. Set some easily attainable goals in the first 2-3 months, and once you reach them, you'll be well on your way to reaching your loftier goals.

I'm not saying to limit yourself without reason. Heck, when I started out, I had no idea what I could achieve, both in business and in fitness! But it helps to take the long view and bite off *less* than you can chew, at least initially. As soon as you gain enough momentum to have incorporated these things into your life, I would encourage you to set the bar a bit higher and give yourself more of a challenge.

Another tip is to set a long-term goal, then work backwards to set a few benchmarks. This makes a big goal more manageable by turning it into several little goals, all of which you can certainly reach!

While many factors impact your results, including how much weight you gained; your diet before, during, and after pregnancy; your exercise program and intensity; the care available postpartum; etc.; a realistic goal is about a pound a week. You may notice a huge difference in your body during the first two weeks after delivery, when you lose much of the accumulated pregnancy-related fluid. After that, loss of fat stores is up to you, which will gradually decrease over a period of four to six months as long as you follow through with consistency.

If we put all this into practice, it might look like this: Let's say you want to lose 20 pounds by your next birthday, which is 5 months away. Instead of starving yourself and working out like crazy, which just isn't sustainable, realize that 20 pounds lost in 5 months is 4 pounds each month, which is 1 pound a week. As I pointed out, this is generally an attainable goal. So your goals then become to drop 4 pounds in a month, or 1 each week, which is much more manageable than the 20 pound overall goal. You know that by simply following the clean eating guides we've discussed, including eating those 10 Superfoods, and by following a proper interval- and strength-training program, you can lose that 1 pound a week, and eventually that 4 pounds a month, and *eventually* you'll be wondering how those 5 months passed by so quickly and who that person is in the mirror!

Have fun getting started, and if you need any help, that's what I'm here for!



Strengthen Your Core Properly

Getting a flatter tummy takes a combination of following a clean diet, eating more protein and produce, and performing short but high-intensity strength workouts.

But we can go a step further for the exercise prescription: In order to get rid of the mommy belly and have a flat tummy, you must work from the inside out.

Unfortunately, many moms are doing it backwards by spending time performing hundreds of traditional ab exercises daily. You know the ones: sit-ups, crunches, side crunches, and anything that relies on fancy equipment. While there absolutely is a place for isolated ab exercises, they work best only after a significant amount of body fat has already been lost.

Doing isolated ab exercises does next to nothing to boost metabolism or help burn more fat. Always remember: You cannot choose where you lose fat. There is no such thing as targeted fat loss! Furthermore, building muscle on one part of your body does not magically melt the fat directly above it.

So what does work?

The most effective way for moms to target their abs is to strengthen their core.

The “core” is the most important group of muscles in anyone’s body, and moms looking to tighten their tummies should spend extra time strengthening it.

Why Is the Core So Important?

Nearly all movement originates from your core. Everything, from getting out of bed in the morning to picking up your child, relies on a sturdy core.

Because it is central (no pun intended!) to even your most basic movements, a weak core will negatively impact every compound exercise that you now know is key to effectively targeting your trouble spots.

Your core is strengthened by performing stability exercises. Those traditional ab exercises like the crunch and sit-up do little more than strengthen the outer muscles and put enormous pressure on the spine. They fail to properly

strengthen the core from the inside out, which is extremely important for moms, as you will find out below.

What Exactly Is the Core?

Your core includes a host of important muscles that wrap around your middle like a corset. The main muscle seen in those who have well defined abs is the rectus abdominus, but it is just one of many core muscles that are essential for healthy movement and a tighter tummy.

Working from the inside out to strengthen your core is especially important for moms compared to other groups. This is because moms' core muscles are overstretched during pregnancy, reducing their strength and stability. We must make a concerted effort to regain strength and repair the deepest core muscles, such as the transverse abdominus.

In fact, due to this overstretching that occurs during pregnancy, one of the worst exercises a new mom can make is turning to crunches, which only work the outermost abdominal muscles and can actually make abdominal separation in the deepest layer worse.

Best Place to Start to Strengthen Your Core

The Plank

The most basic, yet most effective, core stability exercise you can do is, without a doubt, the plank.

The trick, at least at first, is doing it correctly.

Because body positioning is so important to this exercise, I want to share with you a video of how to check that your setup is approximately correct and that you are maximizing your success with the exercise.

If you can't access the video, it's not a problem, and I will share the takeaway tips for the setup of the plank.

[Flat Ab Exercises for Busy Moms](#)

In the video above, I demonstrate a super effective tip on how to get the most out of your plank and truly feel the muscles that must be working in order to increase core stability. You'll need a partner and a thin, hard, and long stick such as a broomstick.

Here's how to perform a plank: Start on your belly on the ground. Push up onto your forearms so that your hands are facing forward, your elbows are bent at a 90-degree angle, and your toes are pushing into the ground. Make sure that your body is a straight line from your head to your feet. Brace your core/abs the whole time to keep from slouching.

The Plank Checklist

- ✓ Forearms are parallel to body (no clasped hands)
- ✓ Toes pushing into the ground, and feet as wide as you need to (wider is more stable and better for beginners)
- ✓ Actively squeeze glutes (do not lock knees)
- ✓ Activate deep core muscles (draw belly button back)
- ✓ Neutral spine, which as shown in the video can be determined by the stick test (must maintain 3 contact points: at the head, the upper back, and the butt)
- ✓ Quality NOT Quantity (20 seconds of a great neutral spine plank repeated 3 times is MUCH more effective than 60-90+ seconds of a sloppy plank)

Now that you know what constitutes proper form in the plank, you will soon be ready for the plank variations. From the front plank, you can move on to the side plank. There are two variations of this exercise, one easier and one more challenging. The first is a short lever side plank, which is a bit easier than the second exercise, the long lever side plank. Progress from the short lever to the long lever as quickly as you can.

Short Lever Side Plank: Start by placing your elbow under your shoulder and your hand directly in front of your chest. Bend your knees so that they form a 90-degree angle and your feet are directly behind you. You will then press up through the knee and elbow and drive your hips up into the air so that you form a straight line. You should also form a straight line from head to knee. Make sure to squeeze the butt and press the hips forward and up. Do not let the hips drop. Squeeze your shoulder blades together as well.

Long Lever Side Plank: The set up and form are identical except you will press off your feet instead of your knees.

Benefits of Core Stability

When you have the right amount of core strength, not only do you stabilize the spine optimally, but you can carry this optimal relationship over to other movements in your workouts, such as squatting, deadlifting, lunging, etc.

Think about it: If you're in poor alignment when you're just standing around, how bad is it going to be when you're trying to move challenging weights?

If you improve your core strength and stability, you will improve every movement you do, both during workouts and during life.

This will get you even BETTER results, especially when it comes to losing that muffin top!



How to Fight a Craving and Win

Cravings, those intense desires to eat a particular food, can sure throw off the best-made plans to eat right and stay on track, especially during trouble times like the holiday season when sweets and treats seem to be everywhere.

So what can you do when one hits?

I've developed a plan of attack for how to battle cravings, even the strongest ones that strike without warning.

But, before I share it, I need to tell you something.

It is never just ONE indulgence that causes weight gain. In fact, it is even more than two. It is actually the choices made day in and day out that cause weight gain—or weight loss.

You see, part of the secret to overcoming cravings is to simply keep them in check. It doesn't amount to some all-out battle of willpower, nor does it require adhering to a ridiculously restrictive diet plan.

It might seem counter-intuitive, but accepting your cravings, rather than trying to fight them, is one of the most effective methods for changing your response to food.

The second most effective approach is to check your current eating habits. If you are eating supportively about 75% of the time, then giving in to a craving here and there is NOT going to cause weight gain. This isn't meant to be used as an excuse TO give in; rather, it should provide perspective and allow you to be forgiving of any transgressions you've made and MOVE ON.

If, however, you are having cravings daily—even multiple times a day—then this is a sign that your nutrition plan needs some tweaking. If this is the case, then the craving strategies that I share will probably not help you, and you might need to revisit the first chapter of this book.

Often times, the reason we have frequent cravings is simply that our bodies are starved: starved in that we are not eating enough or starved in that there is little to no nutritional value in the processed foods we are eating.

It's OK if this is you; I was once here, too!

The goal, then, is to manage and take control of your dietary choices and slowly begin to transform your habits to eating supportively.

One of the best ways to take control of your eating is to keep a food journal. This will allow you to be better prepared for when a craving does hit—and yes, no one is immune.

Here is my 5 Step Plan to confront cravings and develop a healthier mind and body.

My Plan for Fighting Cravings and Winning

1. Ask What

I will first ask myself WHAT this craving is. Is this a salty, sweet, fatty, or crunch-and-munch type of craving? Each type of craving means something different for your body, which we can fully investigate in the next step. For example, I often crave salty foods after long workouts or times where I'm sweating in the summer heat. Many moms find themselves craving something sweet when they limit carbohydrates and something fatty when they're taking in less calories than they're used to.

The best plan of attack is to be aware: Identify first, then confront.

2. Ask Why

I then ask WHY I have this craving.

I go through this quick checklist:

- Have I eaten supportively up to this point?
- Is this true hunger, or am I just bored?
- Am I PMS-ing?
- Am I stressed?
- Am I feeling overly emotional about something that happened?
- Am I fatigued, or am I suffering from a lack of sleep?
- Am I dehydrated?

By going through this checklist, you can determine if the craving is more of a psychological want than a physical need. For instance, I've found that the number one cause for a craving or a desire to eat is habit or boredom. We are simply used to snacking and eating constantly because of our entrenched habits, and our bodies fall into that familiar pattern when we let our guard down. Or, if we've been sitting around for a while, our minds are

free to wander—and wander they do, often to the bag of chips in the pantry or the jar of cookies on the counter. Most women I talk to notice that when they are busy and their minds are fully occupied, they have far less of these unexpected cravings. However, when boredom strikes, so, too, does that powerful urge to snack on something sweet.

Even simpler, you may find that the craving has a simple solution. If you feel hungry, or just “not satisfied,” you may be dehydrated. Try drinking a full glass of water, waiting 20 minutes, and checking again. One way to tell your level of hydration is the color of your urine. If it is dark or deeply colored, you need more water!

If you are able to check yourself and discover that the urge is arising from an easily overlooked condition (like boredom, sleep deprivation, or it being that time of the month), then you are much better equipped to overcome the craving.

3. Make a Choice

This is where you exert your control and say, “Yep, I decide to NOT indulge.”

Maybe it is because you are planning to work out later and refuse to feel like crap. Or maybe you remind yourself that you WILL be having that Decadent piece of Godiva Cheescake in 2 more days and that you prefer not to blow your opportunity to indulge guilt-free later on a simple urge now. Either way, you decide you would like to wait and truly enjoy it.

The best part about this step is that you get to see how amazingly in control you are. In reality, your cravings do not control you; you control your cravings! When you exercise that willpower and self-control, you will feel far better for far longer than the moment of pleasure gotten by eating that piece of cake.

This fact illustrates the often-overlooked benefit of working out and eating supportively, a benefit that goes far beyond the number on the scale or what you see in the mirror.

I’m talking about the self-control and empowerment that arises from moving in a deliberate direction and controlling those urges that in many ways are an unhealthy product of our Westernized eating and moving habits: the habits of eating a ton and moving very little. For me—and for most women I’ve worked with—the biggest plus to following the Fit Yummy Mummy program is not necessarily the physical result, which is an amazing thing by

itself; rather, it is the self-knowledge and control over your life that you gain, along with the realization that Yes, You Can! We all realize at one point that the result is possible, the goal is attainable, and you are stronger in mind and body than you thought initially. And to me, that's one of the most profound realizations that you can have.

Did You Know: If you have a sugar craving and think you have found a way around it by choosing a "sugar free" version of this food, think again. When you eat a sugar substitute like Sucralose or Aspartame, you are deceiving your body. You give it something sweet, and when it realizes that it wasn't the real thing, which it does when it doesn't get the expected rise in blood sugar, you end up craving sugar just as much or more.

4. C Ya!

The last step is perhaps the most important, as it prevents you from taking action. Simply put, LEAVE the scene of the craving. My solution is to take a bottle of water, exit the kitchen, and do something different. In about 15-20 minutes, the craving is GONE!

There are three things to keep in mind for this step:

1. Find something else to think about. Take a walk, listen to your favorite playlist, or call a friend. Just set your mind to something else.
2. When your body is dehydrated, you can mistake thirst for hunger. Drinking water can also make you feel temporarily full, thus reducing hunger pangs and cravings.
3. You're most susceptible to your brain's demands during the first 20 minutes after a stressful episode, which is the amount of time it takes for serotonin to bounce back and stress hormones to fall. If you can resist a temptation for just 20 minutes, the urge will likely fade.

5. Be Forgiving

This checklist wouldn't be complete without giving you a prescription for dealing with the inevitable: giving in to a craving. It happens to everyone—even me—and it is not a sign of weakness or that all the hard work you have put in was for naught.

A pound of fat is about 3500 Calories. This means you need to be creating a deficit—or, for this example, an excess—of 3500 Calories to lose (or gain) a pound of fat. How many calories is in the average cookie? I'd say around 200. By this math, you'd have to eat close to 18 cookies to gain that pound

of fat back, assuming you were meeting your energy requirements beforehand.

Going back to what I said earlier, it is not one cookie that makes or breaks your diet; it is the string of cookies—or, in the context of this chapter, that string of choices to put down the cookie and do something else until your next meal—that makes the results.

One of the hardest things to learn is to be forgiving. As I said earlier, sometimes our bodies know better than we do. We have to accept what has happened and keep our goals in mind as we move forward, no matter the transgression that has occurred.

If you don't have 100% success right away and you need to progress over time, that's fine. Just make the best choice the next time a craving hits and get back on track.

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What Eco-Love™ Means to Vooluu

Here at vooluu, we want to change what it means to be an eco-ethical and sustainable company. We call our mission, Eco-Love™.

Our passion for healthy Plant & Mycelium nutrition is as much about inspiring health as it is about supporting the health of our planet. But Eco-Love™ isn't just about what goes into our products; Eco-Love™ must be part of everything we do.

We want to be a company that strives for net zero carbon footprint or Eco-Love™. There is no single “sustainable pill” you can take in our mission to zero carbon footprint, however every choice we make counts. Vooluu lives our commitment to constant improvement by pursuing perfection, one small change at a time.

Our ingredients, our packaging, our office, our suppliers, each of these represents an opportunity to innovate, improve, and bring us closer to our goal.

Come join us on our mission to Eco-Love™.



5 Flat-Tummy Fat-Burn Exercises

As we discussed earlier, strength training is essential for carving out the body you want and is second to only your diet in terms of trimming your tummy.

In this chapter, I want to share with you some fun exercises that you can perform during your strength-training workouts to achieve a double whammy: Not only do they boost your metabolism and burn more fat in less time, but they also target your core, helping to tighten your tummy as you burn the fat.

I've always found it difficult to learn how to do exercises from written descriptions, so I've included a link to a video that you can watch to see the exercises in action.

[5 Flat-Tummy Fat-Burn Exercises for Busy Moms](#)

(If the link doesn't work, simply search for "Holly Rigsby 5 Flat Tummy Fat Burn Exercises for Busy Moms" in YouTube)

1. Goblet Curtsey Lunge

Lunges are one of my favorite exercises. They are a great move to work your thighs and butt, and since this is one of your largest muscle groups in your body, this movement will burn more fat than most other exercises. Plus, this variation challenges your body to stabilize itself while you move to the side with each step back.

Perform in reverse to take pressure off knees and really focus on squeezing your glutes. Holding added weight in front of your chest "goblet style" really helps you feel it in your core and your inner thighs.

Suggested weight: 20-40+lbs. In this video, I am using a 40 lb. DB to match my fitness level, but you could quickly reach that level after a few sessions to get your form down and be comfortable with the movement (remember, the goal is to challenge your body!)

2. Renegade Row

A must-have move, for it not only rocks your core but helps you develop amazing upper body strength. The key is to keep your hips level—do not rock/twist from side to side—and squeeze your glutes to stabilize your body!

The more you feel your core burning, the better you know you are doing this challenging move.

Suggested weight: 8-20+ lbs. In this video, I am using 15-lb. weights.

3. Stability Ball Pull Over

This exercise is an awesome combo for your upper body and core! Keep your arms straight as you lift and lower the weight. Notice how much you have to use your core and even your butt to complete each rep. Slow and controlled is key!

Suggested weight: 10-20+ lbs. In this video. I am using 25 lbs.

4. Stability Ball Step Off

This is a super fun and creative core exercise! For starters, the pushup-plank position with your feet balanced on the ball challenges your arms, chest, and core. Then, lifting and lowering one leg at a time adds just enough instability to really help tone and tighten your core. If you are unable to stay balanced, which is perfectly normal if you are just starting, try this move with your feet elevated on a bench or step until you can handle a ball.

5. Half Turkish Get Up

One of my favorite, total body Kettlebell moves is the Turkish Get Up. It is an advanced move that can take months to learn, so I've tweaked it by removing the last portions of the lift and using only a dumbbell. The Half Get Up not only helps you master the Turkish Get Up, but the lifting and lowering of the weight will also challenge your core and, surprisingly, your backside!

Suggested weight: If this move is brand new to you, NO WEIGHT is plenty enough! Only add weight once you have the basics of this move down. In this video, I am using a 25 lb weight. You will complete repetitions on both sides.

6. The Bonus: Burpees Plus Pushup

Who doesn't love Burpees? It might be my favorite metabolism-boosting movement, especially when added to the end of a fat-loss workout.

This variation combines the beloved burpee with an all-time strength-boosting full-body classic: the pushup. With the two joined in one exercise, you're guaranteed to have a challenge for not only your heart and lungs but

also your core, lower body, and upper body. It's one of the simplest and most effective full-body bodyweight exercises!

Note: The burpee requires a jump at the top of the movement, but if that is too challenging, cut out the jump while you learn the movement. Also, if pushups prove to be too difficult at first, simply cut them out, too. Then, once you can, drop to your knees to complete pushups during the exercise, then drop to only 1 knee, and finally perform the exercise with the full pushup.

The Flat-Tummy Fat-Burn Workout

Flat-Tummy Circuit

Perform one move after another with no rest. You will take a short breather—about 60 sec—in between each round of the circuit. Repeat this circuit 3-5 times depending on your fitness level. Complete 8-10 repetitions of each move or use timed circuits to track how many reps/rounds you can complete in 15-20 minutes. If using timed circuits, start with 20 seconds before moving up to 30 seconds on your second or third time doing the workout. Then, when you can handle 30 seconds of each move, increase the number of rounds you perform. I guarantee this will be a fun and effective challenge!

Flat-Tummy Supersets

Perform these moves in pairs with no rest between moves. Complete each pair 3 times in a row before taking a break and moving to the next super set. So A1, A2, A1, A2, A1, A2, Rest 60 sec, B1, B2, B1, etc., for all three supersets.

A1 Goblet Curtsey Lunge
A2 Renegade Row

B1 Stability Ball Pull Over
B2 Stability Ball Step Off

C1 Half Get Up
C2 Burpees Plus Push Up

As stated, this workout should take 15-20-minutes to complete.

Before you add in variations or make substitutions, do this workout as written several times until you are competent with the movements and know how to challenge yourself with weights. In terms of busting that dreaded muffin top, not many other workouts combine the metabolic boost from strength exercises with the core-strengthening benefits of this workout!



Delicious AND Fat-Burning Breakfast

Skipping breakfast is not an option—at least, not if your goal is to boost your metabolism, burn more fat, and enjoy energy throughout the day.

I bet it's not news to you that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. I'd guess that you've heard it ever since you were a child—I know I have!

Well, there is a reason that it is repeated so often. Active people that are growing (e.g., children), that are working, or that have responsibilities and things to do simply cannot afford to run out of energy during the day.

Another way to look at it is that breakfast programs your metabolism for the rest of the day. After all, by the time breakfast rolls around, you have essentially been fasting for 8-12 hours.

What I find to be surprising is how many know this yet still choose to skip it. One of the reasons many women miss breakfast is that they feel that missing a meal here or there will jumpstart their results. In general, this couldn't be further from the truth. The biggest result from missing a meal, especially one as critical as breakfast, is that your appetite has the tendency to overpower you later in the day, where it becomes harder to resist cravings. Eat a supportive breakfast and you'll stop those cravings before they even start.

Knowing vs. Doing: the biggest difference between those who get results and those who do not.

If you are serious about getting results and fighting that muffin top, then I'd like to help you do something about it! Here's a quick fat-burning breakfast checklist to help you get going. Once you become comfortable with it, you can make tweaks to see and feel even better results!

Fat-Burning Breakfast Checklist

1. Eat within an hour of waking

Even if you think you are not hungry, you should eat within an hour of your alarm going off.

Your body has been fasting while you slept, so breakfast is the perfect time to:

- Replenish nutrients lost
- Give your body and brain much needed fuel for the day ahead
- Kick start your metabolism
- Lessen the risk of binging on high-carb foods later in the day

If you like having that hungry feeling, try drinking a glass of water right when you awaken in order to stimulate your digestive system, though I would still recommend eating something supportive.

2. Eat a breakfast that's focused on protein and produce

Protein and produce form the foundation of the Fit Yummy Mummy nutrition plan. This is because they provide essential nutrients, they work together to build and repair muscle, they make you feel full, and they don't have excessive amounts of calories.

Following this plan, choose foods that will get you at least 10 grams of protein (ideally 20 grams) and a couple servings of produce in the form of fruits and/or veggies.

In a typical breakfast, I will have 2 eggs, half a grapefruit, and 2 cups of spinach, which I steam alongside my eggs just before they are done cooking. The two eggs will give me 12 grams of protein, and the other items add up to at least 2 servings of produce (2 cups of spinach could be considered 2 servings).

Other breakfast options include Greek yogurt with fresh berries and other fruit (frozen works well, too), or you could have a Green Smoothie, which has protein powder and a green veggie such as spinach blended in (see below for a sample recipe). Although the second option sounds unconventional, it is actually easy to make, very healthful, and can be super yummy!

Don't stop yourself there! There are plenty of protein-packed recipes that include a couple servings of fruits and/or veggies that you will love! I will share a couple later in the chapter...

3. Don't skip the healthy fats

It's time to let go of the low-fat diet trend. Your body NEEDS good fats!

Just as with slow, low-intensity aerobic exercise, we have been fed misinformation by countless "authorities," but at last the tables are turning on dietary fat. Here is a short list of some of the amazing things fat can do for you:

- Fat provides slow-burning energy.
- Fat is needed so your body can absorb the fat soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K, and prevent deficiencies of these vitamins.
- Fat provides flavor and texture to help prevent food from being bland and dry.
- Fat helps food to stay in the stomach longer, giving a greater sense of satisfaction and preventing hunger soon after meals.
- Fat may help your body produce endorphins (natural substances in the brain that produce pleasurable feelings).
- Diets too low in fat (less than 20 – 25%) may trigger cravings.

In short, healthy fats will not only help add to your energy, but they also contribute to feeling satisfied longer and help eliminate cravings!

Need some options for healthy fats? Some of my favorites include avocados, walnuts, nut butters, coconut oil, flax seed oil, and extra-virgin olive oil are all excellent sources of heart-healthy fats that provide plenty of additional health benefits.

For my breakfast, I not only consume the natural, healthy fats from my eggs but also cook my eggs in coconut oil, which gives the meal a fabulous flavor!

4. Be careful on the processed carbs

This is one of the biggest mistake breakfast eaters make: filling up on too many processed and refined carbs.

Doing so can lead to increased hunger and cravings shortly after breakfast and corresponding big dips in energy.

Watch out for empty carb calories, which include items such as cereals, granola, bagels, breads, breakfast bars, muffins, waffles, pancakes, and pastries. These items are simply too high in calories and too low in the nutrients needed to rev up your metabolism and keep you energized for the day. When in doubt, look at the nutritional label. Examine how much sugar (and total carbohydrates) you are taking in when compared to fiber, fats, and protein.

That being said, yes, there certainly are good carbs that you can choose to eat that are not stripped of essential nutrients and that are supportive to your fat loss efforts.

Choose whole grain items such as steel cut oats, rolled oats (you can seek out gluten-free options), quinoa, sprouted grain bread (Ezekiel brand),

barley, kamut, amaranth, and buckwheat. Grains such as these can easily be prepared the night before then tossed with fresh fruit and nuts for a tasty and satisfying meal in the morning. This makes it quick, nutritious, convenient, and delicious.

Think you're too busy?

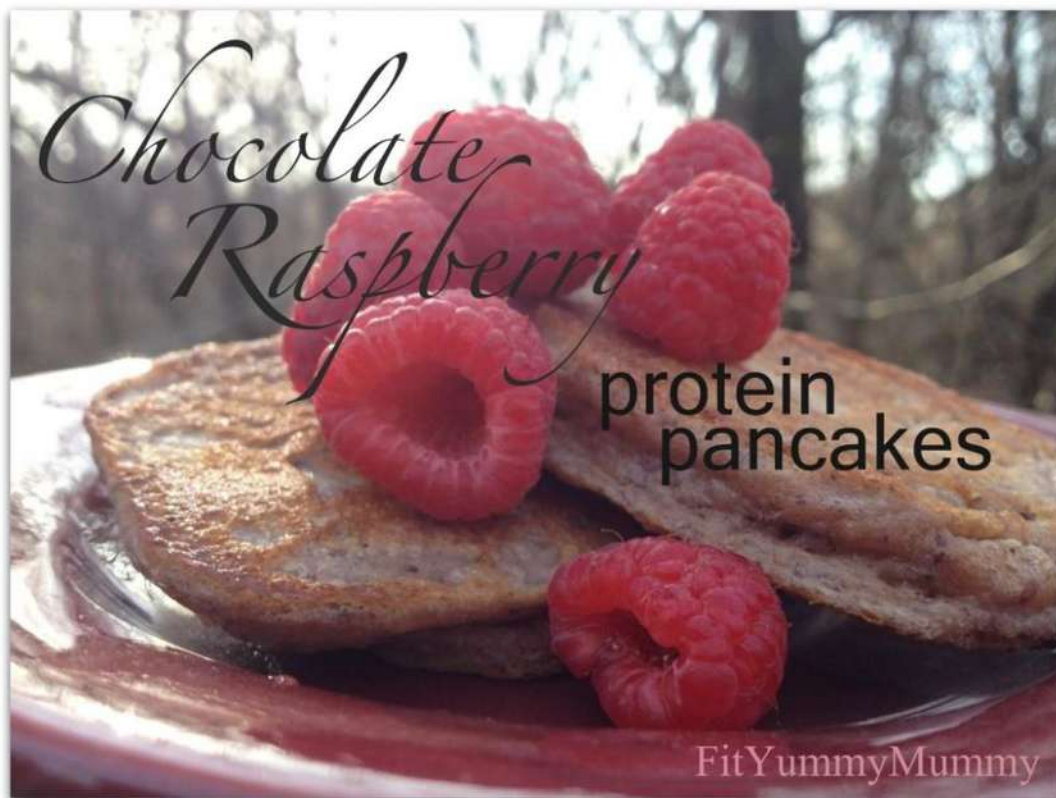
Nope. This is simply not a valid excuse.

Even if you are super busy in the morning, there is no excuse to either prep your breakfast so it is ready the night before or have a super simple Green Smoothie, which is entirely grab and go!

My favorite is 2-3 cups of spinach, 1 cup of frozen blueberries, 2 scoops Prograde Chocolate Protein, and a teaspoon of coconut oil.

Ready to try some delicious and nutritious recipes? Here are two of my favorite supportive breakfast meals!

Chocolate Raspberry Protein Pancakes



Protein pancakes are a delicious and healthy way to add variety, as they can be customized to use any berry or flavor combination imaginable (like crepes, pancakes can be savory).

While the recipe I typically use is posted below, the recipe for making protein pancakes is super flexible, giving you dozens of options.

Here are 4 tips to keep in mind when whipping up your favorite protein pancakes.

1. Make it moist

Moisture requires including moist ingredients. Choose from cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, pumpkin puree, baked sweet potato, banana, applesauce, or berries. I'll also add a splash of almond or coconut milk as needed.

2. Flour for volume

Fluffy pancakes are the best, so don't skip the flour. However, using white flour is simply not nutritious nor supportive. Don't fret, as there are many supportive options to choose from, including oats, coconut flour, almond flour, oat flour, amaranth flour, chickpea flour, buckwheat flour, or quinoa flour. These are all gluten-free, high-protein, and high-fiber flours. A teaspoon of baking powder also helps create a fluffy texture.

3. Eggs to bind

Use egg whites or whole eggs to bind the mixture together. Plus, eggs add extra protein that is essential to a healthful breakfast! I like to use one whole egg and one egg white to increase the amount of healthy fats while binding the batter well.

4. Power it up with protein

You'll need a high-quality whey protein for these pancakes. I recommend and use [Prograde Protein](#), and the chocolate is my family's favorite. Just use about a scoop, for adding too much can make your pancakes rubbery.

As you can see, you have a lot of flexibility when it comes to the creation of your protein pancakes. I love this feature, for I am one to see a recipe and tweak it just to see what else I can come up with. Variety is the spice of life!

Chocolate Raspberry Protein Pancakes

Ingredients

- 1 egg, 1 egg white
- 1/4 cup almond flour
- 1/4 cup cottage cheese
- 1 heaping scoop Prograde Chocolate Protein Powder
- Splash Almond Milk
- Sprinkle of cinnamon

Directions

To mix: Start with the wet ingredients, then gradually mix in the dry. If using a blender like a Magic Bullet, add the dry after the wet has been well blended. When experimenting with different options, be sure your batter comes out thicker rather than watery. You should have to spoon the batter onto the pan.

Heat a pan or skillet on medium heat. Add some healthy oil (I love to use coconut oil, as this only adds to the flavor burst), then spoon the batter onto the pan or skillet to make pancakes of the desired size. Flip pancakes when bubbles start to pop on top, at which point the bottom should be golden brown. Remove from pan once thoroughly cooked, add any desired toppings, and enjoy!

Toppings

These pancakes are delicious as is but can also be topped with fresh berries.

Of course, you can get creative with your toppings, too. Consider using your favorite jam or jelly or even a Greek yogurt chocolate sauce. Here's a healthy recipe for an indulgent treat!

Greek Yogurt "Chocolate Sauce"

Ingredients

- 1/2 tbsp of cacao powder
- 2 tbsp almond/coconut milk
- 2 tbsp of Greek yogurt
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Directions

Mix everything together until well blended, heat in the microwave for 15 seconds, and pour over pancakes.

As you make your own protein pancakes, I encourage you to be creative with your ingredients, additional mix ins, and toppings. Just keep the 4 tips in mind as you experiment.

Coconut Quinoa Recipe



This is a fast, simple, and satisfying meal that you can enjoy for breakfast or even as an energizing snack! It takes less than 5 minutes to prepare in the morning and will fill you up for hours.

In case you are unfamiliar with this wonder grain, quinoa is a high-protein grain with a high fiber content that helps fight cravings.

Also in this recipe are fruits of your choice and shredded, unsweetened coconut to make this a healthy and sweet treat. The fruits add slow-burning carbs for fuel, while the coconut adds a dose of healthy fat. Both provide fiber and tons of flavor.

As a bonus, this recipe comes with a video that features Baby Alexander! Check it out if you'd like a visual for how to make it.

[Coconut Quinoa Breakfast for Busy Moms](#)

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup cooked quinoa—I love red quinoa
- 1-1/2 small banana, mashed
- 3-4 dried apricots, chopped (I used apricot preserves)
- 1 tsp shredded coconut, unsweetened

Directions

Cook the quinoa the night before. All this takes is boiling 2 times the amount of water as quinoa, adding the quinoa, and simmering for about 20-25 minutes. Once cooked, remove from heat, cool, and store in your refrigerator.

The next day, add the banana and apricots to the measured out quinoa. Stir together and enjoy!



3 Unexpected Tips to Trim Your Tummy

Now that we've covered the essentials to busting the baby belly, we can explore some extra tips that will surely help you out in your journey to a slimmer, healthier you.

In this chapter, I want to share three unexpected yet simple and super effective tips to help trim your tummy and lose extra inches.

Tummy Trimming Tip #1: Avoid Fake Foods

Considering the first and most important principle of losing that muffin top is to eat cleanly, this may not seem like such an "unexpected" tip. However, based on what I see Fit Yummy Mummy's posting in their progress journals in the Club Forums, I still see a surprising amount of "diet" foods.

From Special K cereals to fat-free muffins, I've seen our Fit Yummy Mummy's eating all types of diet food marketed as healthy. It takes some work, but you must stop falling for the promises made on the packaging! If a product has to convince you that it's healthy, skip it!

Specifically, watch out for packaged foods that have added sugars, artificial sweeteners, and preservatives. Highly processed foods have been shown to cause an accumulation of toxins in the body, which can lead to increased fat storage. Also, avoid foods with ingredients that you don't recognize. Look at nutrition labels closely; in order to eat cleanly, you should be able to identify each ingredient as a real food.

Remember, to lose your muffin top, your nutritional priority is to consume whole, natural, fresh foods. Revisit the first chapter to get started eating more supportively, or if you want step-by-step meal plans and fat-burning recipes for busy moms, be sure to grab your copy of the [Fit Yummy Mummy Cookbook!](#)

Tummy Trimming Tip #2: Cut Your Cardio

No, traditional, long-duration cardio is NOT the best way to burn more belly fat. In fact, the more cardio you do, the harder it becomes to lose that last bit of flab.

While it may seem counterintuitive, in the realm of fat loss, less is more, at least in terms of duration. However, the higher the intensity, the greater the effect.

This principle is the foundation of interval training, which we talked about earlier. Study after study proves that interval training is the smart way to trim your tummy.

Here's one example for you: An Australian study compared a 20-minute interval training workout (done 3 times per week) against a 40-minute slow cardio workout (also done 3 times per week). Women did the workout for 15 weeks, and only the interval group lost belly fat. The cardio group got practically no results at all. For these women, interval training burned fat around the stomach first!

Not only is interval training more effective, but also who has the time to devote to doing MORE cardio with LESS results? Not me, and not any of my Fit Yummy Mummy's. That's why we've all switched over to interval training.

Just three 15-minute sessions a week, ones that alternate periods of high intensity with active recovery periods, is a sustainable way to see progressively better results, week in and week out. This method keeps your body challenged without sacrificing too much time away from your family, and it allows you to recover and grow adequately between sessions. I guarantee that you will look and feel better after just one week of this training!

Tummy Trimming Tip #3: Get Some Zzzzz's

Busy moms are notorious for NOT getting enough sleep, myself included. But this might be doing us more harm than we realize.

Moms with newborns aside, studies have shown that those who get less than four hours of sleep per night are 73% more likely to be obese and experience an increase in visceral fat (belly fat) than those who get at least seven hours a night.

Why?

- Lack of sleep lowers Leptin, which is a protein that suppresses appetite and tells the brain when the stomach is full. This increases your appetite the following day, which makes it even harder to say no to snacking and staying on track.

- Lack of sleep inhibits the production of insulin, which is a storage hormone that regulates blood sugar. Chronic sleep deprivation wrecks your body's regulation of insulin, meaning that you are not only preventing your body from burning more fat but also teaching it to become very good at STORING it, especially in the belly!
- Lack of sleep leads to increased cortisol, which is a stress hormone that is involved in breakdown of lean tissue (e.g., muscle) and the storage of fat. Throughout the day, your body naturally produces cortisol, and in fact, our bodies actually convert stored cortisol into a healing nutrient during deep sleep. The problem arises when we don't get sufficient deep sleep. In this case, instead of creating energy, cortisol actually starts to create belly fat and break down your muscle mass—two things we moms can definitely do without!

In case that triple whammy can't convince you to catch some more z's, keep in mind that sleep is a crucial time for your body to replenish and repair itself. Indeed, during sleep, your body has the opportunity to repair and rebuild muscles. These rebuilt muscles increase the lean muscle mass in your body, and the more lean mass you have, the faster your body burns fat and calories!

Get-to-Sleep Tips

Sometimes life might throw you a few curveballs, leading to a disastrous sleep schedule that only makes you more anxious the next day when it's bedtime. It's important to relax, unwind, and prepare for sleep just as you would prepare for a workout. Here's what works for me:

- Get in a consistent sleep schedule, where you go to the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning. You'll be amazed at how wonderful this makes you feel.
- Or, if you find yourself staying up too late or still waking up tired, go to bed a full hour earlier than you otherwise would.
- Get rid of the stimulants. I don't just mean coffee and caffeinated tea, though limiting your intake of these after noon is a good idea for restful sleep. But in the hour leading up to your bedtime, turn off the TV, power down the computer, and allow your body to slowly settle down. Reading a book helps this process.
- Sip on chamomile or Sleepy Time tea. Any herbal tea will work, as long as it has no caffeine or other stimulants.
- Dim the lights and listen to relaxing music. I enjoy Enya!

If you've got the basics down for targeting your muffin top (eating clean, performing interval training, targeting the core muscles), give these 3 Tummy Trimming Tips a try to speed up your results and make you happier and healthier overall. I guarantee you'll notice a difference, especially if sleep has been a problem for you. Clean up your diet, exercise, and sleep habits, and you will be well on your way to seeing amazing results!

vooluu



The Power of Ten

One of my favorite sayings for Fit Yummy Mummy's is, "Abs are made in the kitchen."

In the first chapter, we went over ten of the most powerful foods you can eat to curb your appetite, build your muscles, provide serious nutrition, and rev your metabolism. Did you notice that nearly half of them were fruits or veggies?

Going off that point, one of the most effective calorie-control strategies that will burn more belly fat is to set a goal to eat 10 servings of produce every day.

By doing so, you not only get full on less calories, but your body also has the energy and nutrients to fire on all cylinders so you can burn more fat and flatten your belly!

What Types of Produce Are Best?

Four of the "Top 10 Muffin-Top-Melting Foods" are fruits or veggies, which is a great place to start.

Basically, anything that is a fruit or a veggie will work well, though some are better than others. The following items are some of the more common and highly nutritional fruits and vegetables you should be consuming.

- Spinach, romaine lettuce, chard, kale, mustard greens, collard greens, and other green, leafy veggies
- Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and other cruciferous vegetables
- Bell peppers
- Asparagus
- Onions
- Brussels Sprouts
- Celery
- Carrots
- Cucumbers
- Blueberries, strawberries, and other berries
- Apples
- Bananas
- Oranges

- Tomatoes (along with salsa)
- Avocadoes (along with guacamole)
- Eggplant
- Squash
- Sweet Potatoes
- Pomegranates

I invite you to pick up a new or unfamiliar fruit or vegetable each week at the grocery store and see what delicious dish you can make with it. Your family will thank you once they've tried it!

What Is a Serving Size?

Now that you have a big, long list of produce to eat, we should talk about how much you actually should eat to get to the 10 servings mark.

Fruits

One serving of fruits is:

- 1 medium to large size fruit
- 1/2 cup small fruits like berries, grapes, etc.
- 1 cup chopped fruits like melons, grapefruit, etc.
- 1/4 cup dried fruit

Veggies

One serving of veggies is:

- 1 cup cooked or raw veggies
- 2 cups leafy greens
- 1/2 cup beans/legumes

Now, you may not be used to eating 10 servings of produce a day, but do not fret. This is a goal and a very healthy, fat-burning habit you can work your way up to!

For starters, make sure you map out your meals. Yes, plan for success!

First, organize your food into 4 to 6 meals each day: breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks.

Then, base every meal and snack on eating at least 1 protein item and 1-2 produce items. After these essentials are mapped, add in a variety of whole, natural foods such as beans/legumes and whole-grain items

If you are new to this , aim to start with just 1 produce serving at each meal and work your way up.

Day in the Life

As a reminder for why it's so important to include 10 servings of produce a day, fruits and veggies are low in calories, high in satisfying fiber, and loaded with nutrients to create a thriving metabolism. Simply put, if you reach or come close to the 10 servings goal, you are almost guaranteed to look and feel better in no time!

Here is a sample of what 10 servings of produce looks like for me on a typical day. Each produce serving is paired with a protein, which isn't shown.

- Breakfast: 1 cup blueberries (2)
- Snack: 1 banana (1)
- Lunch: 3 cups spinach, 1 cup diced tomatoes and bell peppers (3)
- Snack: 1/2 cup dried cherries (1)
- Snack: 1 cup carrots, 1 pear (2)
- Dinner: 1 cup sautéed spinach and squash (1)

Sound like a lot of food? Take a guess at the calorie intake for 10 servings of produce.

If you guessed less than 650 calories, you'd be correct!

While eating this much produce may sound like a lot of eating, calorie-wise, it is not even half the calories needed for the day, which means you get full on less and naturally curb your calorie intake!

Like I said, this is an ambitious goal for beginners. The first step would be to plan out your meals, like I told you. Start small, only having 1 serving with each meal. Easy grab-and-go options include celery (with peanut butter or almond butter is my favorite!), baby carrots, dried fruit (look for those with no sugar added), most fruits (I like apples, bananas, pears, and oranges), and yogurt with nuts and berries.

Be creative! And once you have made the plan, go to the grocery store to purchase the produce. It does you no good if you have a plan but no food!

Then give it a try, one day at a time. If it feels too overwhelming, cut back and try again the next day. Ask your family and friends for support. But always keep trying, knowing that this is a simple, highly effective, and

delicious (really, these foods taste so much better than overly processed food lookalikes!) way to reach your goals and bust your muffin top.

Never lose sight of the ultimate goal, and ask yourself how what you are doing today is helping you reach that goal!



The advertisement features a white jar of Organifi Green Juice on the left. The jar has a white lid and a label with the Organifi logo at the top. Below the logo, it says "Coconut & Ashwagandha Infused" and "GREEN JUICE" in large, bold, white letters. Underneath, it says "Gently Dried Superfood Powder". At the bottom of the label, there are five circular icons: "VEGAN", "GLUTEN FREE", "SUGAR FREE", "DAIRY FREE", and "VEGAN". A red seal on the left side of the jar says "VOTED #1 BEST TASTING". The jar is set against a green background. To the right of the jar, the Organifi logo is displayed in a large, green, stylized font. Below the logo, the text "Help Reduce Stress." and "Increase Energy." is written in white. At the bottom, a red banner contains the text "The *natural solution* in a simple, delicious drink!" in white.

organifi

Coconut & Ashwagandha Infused

GREEN JUICE

Gently Dried Superfood Powder

VEGAN GLUTEN FREE SUGAR FREE DAIRY FREE VEGAN

Help Reduce Stress.

Increase Energy.

Save Time.

*The **natural solution** in a simple, delicious drink!*

Crafting Your Perfect Intervals Workout

Without a doubt, the most effective exercise you can do for fat loss, a sculpted body, overall health, and a disappearing muffin top—especially for a busy mom—is interval training.

Intervals are simply brief, high-intensity periods of exercise (where you work out as intensely as you can for your fitness level, which is anywhere from a 7 to a 9 on a perceived rate of exertion scale) alternated with active recovery periods (where you slow down just long enough to catch your breath before you repeat this circuit again).

As a reminder, 3 huge benefits of intervals are that they preserve lean muscle, curb your appetite, and are time savers. As a busy mom, I can't think of a better solution!

Earlier, I shared a challenging workout that I encourage you to perform until you are proficient at it. While that workout will do wonders for your body, you might thrive under a different type of workout, or you might not have access to the equipment. That's why I'd like to share a plan for customizing your intervals workout and tweaking the variables you need to bust your muffin top. After this chapter, I hope you will feel more comfortable with creating your own basic workouts. As always, if you need more help, that's what I'm here for!

3 Essential Intervals Tips

1. Up the Intensity

The key to seeing results with interval training is high intensity during the work effort, so be sure you are working hard enough during the work period. If you can hold a conversation or are breathing just a little harder than normal, you aren't working hard enough.

As a result of working too hard in the recovery portion, most people don't work hard enough during the work period. However, what causes the body to change is the high intensity of effort, so make sure you are doing quality training.

An additional super cool thing about interval workouts is that you can challenge yourself and learn more about yourself and your body. I know

when I started, I couldn't push beyond a certain barrier, but now that I'm more familiar with my body, I can actually push myself much harder, which brings about better results than I've ever had. As I've said, if you want to change, you must challenge yourself. During your workouts, your goal should be to find out how great you can be and how hard you can work. I bet you can really surprise yourself!

How to do it: If you are working out for time, count the number of reps you do for each exercise in the first set. Then, the next set try to get just 1 more repetition in. The set after that, get another extra rep in for a total of 2 reps more, and any additional sets you do, strive for getting just one more rep.

If you are working out for total reps, either try to do it in less time or select a heavier resistance (or a more challenging progression). For instance, if you are currently doing stationary lunges with a 20 lb. weight, you can use a 25 lb. weight in your second set, or you can move to reverse, forward, or curtsy lunges, which are all harder due to the added movement.

2. Truly Recover

If you follow #1 correctly, you are certainly going to need the recovery interval to rest! Be sure you are actively resting during the "off" or recovery period—and that you worked at an intensity that requires rest.

This tip sounds obvious; after all, it's called a "recovery" period for a reason! However, most moms are so focused on working hard and challenging themselves in these workouts that they forget the point of doing intervals as opposed to steady state exercise: Intervals require an intensity beyond what you can perform continuously, so you need to rest during the recovery or else physically you will be incapable of completing the workout.

Don't worry about "keeping your heart rate up" or trying to "get the most" out of this recovery movement. Interval training is not cardio. It is a totally different method of training. So give up the cardio mindset and get to love your recovery—it's my favorite part of the workout!

How to do it: If you are really cranking up the intensity during your work bouts, when the timer goes off to start your recovery, simply stand and breathe. Don't worry about moving too much, although a little movement can help your muscles if it is light enough. If standing around doesn't appeal to you, you can perform light stretches or just prepare your setup and your mind for your next exercise.

3. All the Right Moves

It's amazing that most people never change their interval training workouts. Sure, we like what we know, but to get the best fat-burning effect, we have to make the workouts more challenging as we adapt to them. One amazing thing about the human body is that it adapts to the physical demands placed on it. If you lift a certain weight enough, you will get stronger, and that weight will become easier to lift. To continue getting stronger, you will have to lift a heavier weight.

Similarly, with burning fat, you will adapt to the workouts you do so that what you did on Day 1 will be less effective on Day 31. It's OK to feel a workout get easier—in fact, that's a great sign that you're getting stronger and in better shape. However, to continue seeing results, you should be using a variety of work-to-rest interval durations, resistances, and exercises.

Also, be sure to keep track of your results so you discover what works best for you. Some moms thrive on more strength-based movements that use heavier resistances, while other moms love dynamic exercises like burpees. By keeping track of the numbers and by even taking periodic pictures (believe me, you'll love that you did this later!), you can keep track objectively of what is working and what isn't.

Keep changing what you're doing to challenge yourself in new ways.

How to Create Your Own Workout

Now that we've covered some common pitfalls, we're ready to cover how to create the perfect workout *for you*.

Warm-up

First, always remember to warm up with 3-5 minutes of light stretching, easy bodyweight movements, and any other preparation you need to be ready to move. This is important for preventing injury. An easy way to do this is to allow the first set to be lighter intensity before ramping it up the next set.

Exercises

Next, you have to choose your exercises. I recommend getting as many full-body movements in your workout as possible, as they result in the biggest boosts to your metabolism and burn the most calories.

However, many times you will want to alternate full-body exercises with ones that specifically target your upper-body or core. But you're in luck because there are plenty of ways to do this!

Simply choose 4-6 exercises for a given workout, making sure that at least half of them are full-body exercises, and you're ready to move on to the next step!

Note: Many moms I talk to come from a running background. Another AWESOME intervals workout for supreme fat loss is to sprint during the work interval and walk during the rest interval. However, when I say sprint, I mean 95% as fast as you can go. Needless to say, this can be a difficult workout. However, the good news is that you don't require too many sprints to get a metabolic boost, and your entire body will benefit tremendously. I only advise this for those that enjoy running and are familiar enough with sprinting to do it without getting injured. As running near your top speed requires a lot of coordination and strength and can result in considerable impact on your joints, it is simply not for everyone.

An alternative is to do these sprint intervals on a stationary bike or elliptical. However, you have to be prepared to work very hard during the "on" session—and very little during the "off" portion. These are great alternatives to the traditional resistance training intervals workout in the gym.

OK, on to the exercises!

Full-body (and challenging lower body): Burpees, Dumbbell or Kettlebell Squat to Press, KB or Barbell Deadlift, KB swings, Turkish Get Up (and Half Turkish Get Up), Skater Jumps, Squat Jumps, Lunges

Upper-body: Pushups, Pullups, Shoulder Press, Seated Rows, Bent Over Rows, Lat Pull-downs, Band Pull-aparts

Core: Plank Variations (Front Plank, Side Plank, 1-Legged Plank, Pushup Position Hold, Exercise Ball Planks, Exercise Ball Step-Downs), Mountain Climbers, Reverse Crunches, Ab wheel rollouts, Resistance band Palloff press, Bird-Dog, Fire Hydrant, Glute Bridge

That list should keep you busy for a while!

Timing and Duration

Finally, you have to choose how you are going to do your exercises, as well as how long the workout is going to be.

In terms of timing, my favorite timing schemes are to perform 30/30s: 30 seconds hard with 30 seconds recovery. Other great (and potentially more challenging) schemes include 30/20, 30/15, 40/20, 45/15, 60/30. Of course, you can also lift for number of reps. Both ways are effective and can help you accomplish your body-shaping goals.

However, just remember to always recover after your work bouts, as that is one of the 3 tips listed above for interval training. Otherwise, you are doing circuit training, which has its merits but isn't quite as effective when it comes to overall fat burn. If your goal is to perform a high-intensity interval workout, then you must recover after each high-intensity work period! If you don't, you'll quickly find out that it's too hard to finish, but believe me, you can do it by just resting like we just talked about.

As for the question of duration: Remember, for the biggest bang for your buck, I recommend only 15-20 minute sessions from start to finish. This can be accomplished in 3-4 sets that take 5 minutes each to complete. For example, pick 5 exercises and follow a 30/30 setup. Each set should take 5 minutes to complete (30 and 30 is 1 minute per exercise, so with 5 exercises, you get 5 minutes per set). Perform 3-4 sets, and you reach your 15-20 minute goal!

Recovery

One last thing: Remember to take off a day in between interval workouts to let your body recover for the next one. If you find yourself perfectly recovered within a few minutes of stopping the workout, let alone the next day, then you probably aren't workout out hard enough. Interval training is designed to challenge your body by having the work bouts be of high intensity. In fact, the higher the intensity, the better, at least to a point. When you find yourself being challenged in the workout, your body will need a full day to recover, so let it! When you come back for the next workout, you'll have more than enough energy to get going and will do your body plenty of good.

And there you have it! 3 common pitfalls to avoid with interval training and some guidelines for creating your own intervals workout. The bottom line is not to fear intervals. While they might be uncomfortable the first few times, as you continue working out consistently, I guarantee you'll begin seeing results. It may take time, but intervals are certainly the quickest, easiest, and most effective solution I've found for busy moms!

And, just as with nutrition, making it into a lifestyle instead of a quick fix that is sure to lead to burnout is key to lifelong happiness with your body.

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Epilogue

What's Next?

I've covered a lot of territory in this book, and you probably have dozens of ideas to get started on banishing your muffin top. You may also have a pretty long list of questions like, "How do I do that exercise?" "Is it really possible to do all this while raising a family?" or "How can eating more help me lose fat? Won't I gain weight?"

When I first started out, I was in the same position as you. Over the years, I have amassed a huge arsenal of knowledge, experience, tools, and other experts to perfect the Fit Yummy Mummy fat loss system. In the end, what I can recommend for you is far more effective than what existed when I was starting.

As I'm sure you and many other moms will have plenty more questions, I'd like to point you to my blog to get started answering some of those hot questions. Just visit:

[getfitandyummy](http://getfitandyummy.com)

to deepen your knowledge base on how to banish the muffin top and trim your tummy—as well as other tips on how to get stronger, eat healthier, sculpt and tone the rest of your body, and yes, even how to be a better mom! In short, you won't want to miss this treasure trove of information!

Finally, as a thank-you for reading, don't forget to check out my VooLuu Supplement gifts to you!

Just head over to:



CLICK HERE!

About the Author

Holly Rigsby is the Fit Yummy Mummy and Busy Mom Fat Loss Expert, ACE Certified Personal Trainer, Kettlebell Athletics certified, and a StreamFit.com contributor. She is also the author of FitYummyMummy.com, the 16-Week Fat Loss System designed Exclusively for Busy Moms, which helps moms burn the baby fat with 15 minute workouts that can be performed at home.

Holly publishes videos and fat loss strategies for moms on her blog GetFitAndYummy.com. She is also the founder of ClubFYM.com, the best online support community for moms. At ClubFYM, Moms meet online to get connected, feel supported, and successfully transform their bodies by taking part in Transformation Challenges; personally interacting with Holly for more personalized coaching; and receiving 2 new fat-burning, follow-along workout videos each month.

Holly graduated from the University of Louisville with a Masters of Arts in Teaching. To date, she has worked with well over 30,000 moms worldwide to help them lose the stubborn baby fat, completely reshape their bodies, and get an even better pre-baby body back. As a trainer, friend, and coach, it is Holly's mission to educate, motivate, and inspire women to take action in order to realize their greatest dreams and goals.

Part of her success as a coach for busy moms stems from her own experience as a proud mother of two boys: Tyler, age 11, and Alex, age 2.

